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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. CUELLAR).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,

July 11, 2019.

I hereby appoint the Honorable HENRY CUELLAR to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NANCY PELOSI,

Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 3, 2019, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties. All time shall be equally allocated between the parties, and in no event shall debate continue beyond 11:50 a.m. Each Member, other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip, shall be limited to 5 minutes.

UNDERSTANDING THE IMPEACHMENT PROCESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GREEN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, and still I rise.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today because I love my country, and I rise today because it is important for us to understand this impeachment process. Whether you agree with the bringing of impeachment or not, it is appropriate to understand the process.

Today, I would like to share a few words about the impeachment process

some 85 days since the Mueller report was presented wherein Mr. Mueller all but indicated that impeachable acts occurred. I have my mnemonic notes that I shall refer to.

The impeachment process itself starts and ends in the House. The House of Representatives and only the House of Representatives can impeach a President. It is very similar to an indictment but not the same as an indictment. Once the impeachment actually takes place, then the process moves to the Senate.

Today, I am going to focus on the House of Representatives. Perhaps we will talk about the Senate on another occasion.

The impeachment process is not an appealable process. Once the House gives its verdict, if you will—a majority of persons present voting for impeachment—there is no appeal. It doesn't go to a friendly court that a President might have. It won't go to the Supreme Court ultimately, where some would contend that the Court is divided along party lines.

I happen to think that judges ought to vote based upon what they perceive the law to be. I tend to give judges the benefit of the doubt when it comes to making their decisions, but there are many who perceive this to be the case.

It is not appealable. It is something that is totally within the province of the House of Representatives.

This vote is a vote of conscience, and this is where I would like to focus a good deal of my energy today.

A vote of conscience means that you vote based upon what your conscience dictates. There will be no instructions given to persons who will vote. Generally speaking, a jury would receive some sort of instructions, indicating that they should make certain findings. There will be no instructions. There will be no indication that we have to do this based upon clear and convincing evidence, that we have to

find beyond a reasonable doubt that something occurred, or that we should do it by a preponderance of the evidence. There is no standard that will be given to Members as they cast their ballots. It is something that each Member does, and it is a vote of conscience.

Now, the question can become, "Whose conscience will it be?" because if you take another person's recommendation and you vote based upon that recommendation, then you could conceivably vote another person's conscience.

I will vote my conscience. I will not be guided by what others, who may be voting based upon political expediency, think. Members can vote based upon political expediency if they so choose. I will vote based upon a moral imperative.

I will vote my conscience, and I will do this because I believe that in this country, the country that I love—I rise because I love my country—that we ought not allow any person to be above the law.

The law of which I speak is Article II, Section 4 of the Constitution. No one should be above the law, but this is the law that governs impeachment. No one should be above the law, and I believe that for some 85 days now since the Mueller report, we have evidence that the Chief Executive Officer has been above the law.

There will be a vote on impeachment. Each Member of this august body has a preeminent privilege of bringing impeachment before the body. I happen to be a Member, and I want to assure all that impeachment is not dead.

I read a story today where there was an indication that it has stalled or has slowed. I want my colleagues to know that I may stand alone when I do this, as this is what my conscience dictates, but I believe that it is better to stand alone than not stand at all.

I will stand. There will be another vote. I am asking that all do what I believe is expected, and that is to vote

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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your conscience, knowing that there is no appeal, knowing that you don't have to worry about the Supreme Court, and knowing that there will be history to judge us all.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to refrain from engaging in personalities toward the President.

RECOGNIZING THE IMPACT OF BELLEFONTE OPPORTUNITY ZONE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. THOMPSON) for 5 minutes.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, on Monday, July 8, I had the privilege of hosting the White House Opportunity and Revitalization Council Executive Director, Mr. Scott Turner, in Bellefonte in Pennsylvania's 15th Congressional District.

Mr. Turner shared his insight, his expertise, and, I will say, his passion for serving economically distressed communities, regarding the recently designated opportunity zone in Bellefonte, with myself and members of the community. It was a productive and engaging discussion hosted by the American Philatelic Society at its headquarters.

Joined by officials from the U.S. Small Business Administration, U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. General Services Administration, and U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Mr. Turner shared a vision behind the White House Opportunity and Revitalization Council, or opportunity zones, as they are more broadly known.

The Council was established to proactively address the 52 million Americans who live in economically distressed communities nationwide in urban areas, suburban areas, and, quite frankly, rural areas.

It was inspiring to hear Mr. Turner's passion when it comes to stimulating economic growth, expanding workforce development opportunities, and promoting long-term investment in distressed communities.

The opportunity zone designation was made possible by the landmark 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act that I was proud to cosponsor and to support. This past April, the White House Council was formed to help align communities with a myriad of Federal agencies that can help supplement public endeavors with private investments.

Because of this, communities, and not the Federal Government, are being put in the driver's seat. The borough of Bellefonte is one of 300 opportunity zones in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, nearly 30 of which are located within Pennsylvania's 15th Congressional District.

These opportunity zones were nominated by the Governor and are nominated by the Governors of each State and territory. The final vetting and finalization for selection are up to the United States Treasury Department.

Opportunity zones are an investment in Pennsylvania's future, our communities' futures, our businesses, and the people who call the Commonwealth home. These zones have great potential when it comes to revitalizing economically distressed communities all across the United States. It is my hope that they can become a catalyst for change and a catalyst for hope in communities across the country.

This facilitates investment by private investors who can take their capital gains that they may have realized because of business transactions that they are engaged in. Normally, these aren't the types of communities where these capital gains are invested. These are areas of higher unemployment and infrastructure issues, maybe housing issues, and a lower median income, not prime places for economic investment by the private sector.

With the incentives of opportunity zones, where these investors can invest these capital gains within those communities for causes and for needs defined by the members of the communities, they are able to realize tax savings.

It encourages them to maintain that investment for 10 years, where they would pay zero taxes on those capital gains and yield a tremendous return on investment for families, for individuals, and for communities.

Additionally, these 23 Federal agencies would provide preferences for competitive grants in these designated opportunity zones, another way of investing.

It was equally inspiring to hear local stakeholders discuss their new developments in Bellefonte, and I am looking forward to helping these communities seek these Federal opportunities.

As I mentioned that day, this is a program that was created by Congress and was signed by President Trump, who executed this with Scott Turner's leadership as Executive Director. It is one that really lies in the community, in terms of identifying what the needs are and the investors who come from the community.

I am grateful to the White House Opportunity and Revitalization Council for its willingness to be on the ground and engage, in the hopes of sparking growth and development in all the designated opportunity zones. Specifically, on Monday, it was Bellefonte.

Moreover, I am grateful to the residents of Bellefonte for joining as engaged citizens who are passionate about the future of their town. By taking advantage of opportunity zones, communities like Bellefonte can play a more proactive role in the future and the destiny of their town that they call home.

IT IS TIME TO BEGIN AN IMPEACHMENT INQUIRY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. GALLEG0) for 5 minutes.

Mr. GALLEG0. Mr. Speaker, no President in the history of our country has ever been subject to as many credible allegations of illegal conduct as Donald Trump.

Given the serious nature of these crimes and the President's refusal to cooperate with congressional investigations, it is time for the House of Representatives to begin an impeachment inquiry.

The Mueller report documented compelling evidence that the President obstructed justice, including numerous attempts to shut down the Mueller investigation.

Despite the strong evidence, DOJ policies prohibited the special counsel from even considering bringing charges against a sitting President. So, Congress has a responsibility to act where Mueller left off.

For the past several months, Trump, his Attorney General, and congressional Republicans have outright lied about the contents and findings of the Mueller report. The Trump administration has repeatedly rejected or undermined congressional subpoenas and obstructed the ability of Congress to get the facts for the American people.

Launching an impeachment inquiry is a necessary step to ensure that we get to the bottom of Trump's wrongdoing. It honors the process that our Founding Fathers enshrined in our Constitution to empower Congress to investigate and hold the President accountable for committing high crimes and misdemeanors.

I believe that impeachment inquiry should examine the actions and conduct documented in the Mueller report, but an impeachment inquiry should not be limited to just those matters. Congress has the responsibility to investigate the broad range of Trump's conduct as part of our inquiry.

With all the tweets and daily distractions, we cannot lose sight of the much broader scope of Trump's alleged wrongdoing: more than a dozen accusations of sexual assault; campaign finance violations, including hush-money payments; illegal foreign contributions to the Trump inaugural committee; illegal misuse of the Trump Foundation charity for personal and political purposes; welcoming foreign interference in U.S. elections; mishandling top-secret information; and abusing the security clearance process for his son-in-law. And we shouldn't overlook how inappropriate it is for the President of the United States to engage in constant, daily lying.

The list, unfortunately, goes on and on.

Trump's actions should concern every single Member of Congress and every American citizen, regardless of what side of the aisle we are on. This activity and behavior call into question Trump's fitness to serve as President of the United States and Commander in Chief.